

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM

SUBJECT: PLANNED VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA OF APPEAL OF
CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVES.

1. RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER AND FATHER THURSTON N. DAVIS, S.J.,
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION,
(AOCF) MET WITH EUR/EE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EMBASSY PRAGUE POLI-
TICAL COUNSELOR, CZECHOSLOVAK DESK OFFICER, AND INR CZECHO-
SLOVAK ANALYST MARCH 29 TO DISCUSS PLANNED JUNE VISIT TO
CZECHOSLOVAKIA EN ROUTE TO USSR.

2. AOCF REPS BRIEFLY DESCRIBED FOUNDATION'S WORK. THE
FOUNDATION, FOUNDED IN 1965, IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL
(ROMAN CATHOLIC, JEWISH, PROTESTANT, GREEK ORTHODOX, PRIVATE
SECTOR) ORGANIZATION CONCERNED WITH RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AROUND
THE WORLD. IT DISPATCHES MISSIONS TO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
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TO ASCERTAIN, THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY, THE STATUS OF RELI-
GIOUS FREEDOM AND TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE GOVERNMENTS TO
PERMIT INCREASED RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THEIR COUNTRIES.

3. AOCF REPS INFORMED US THAT THEY WISH TO VISIT CZECHO-
SLOVAKIA IN JUNE "TO RENEW OLD CONTACTS" EN ROUTE TO THE
USSR. THE AOCF SENT MISSIONS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1967 AND

1969 AT WHICH TIME THEY CALLED ON THEN-ARCHBISHOP TOMASCEK.

RABBISCHEIER HAS HAD SOME CONTACT WITH DR. BASS SINCE THEN. (EUR/EE HAS ASKED FADRAC FOR ANY REPORTS WHICH EMBASSY PRAGUE MAY HAVE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT ON THESE VISITS AND WILL POUCH COPIES TO THE EMBASSY IF AVAILABLE.)

4. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST FOR ADVICE ON HOW THEY MIGHT BEST ARRANGE VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ADVISED AOCF REPS TO REQUEST A COURTESY CALL ON CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR JOHANES BY TELEPHONING CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY DCM KUKAN. WE FURTHER ADVISED AOCF REPS THAT, IN DISCUSSION WITH JOHANES, THEY SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THE PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT (I.E., TO RENEW CONTACTS WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS) AND MENTION THAT THEY ARE STOPPING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA EN ROUTE TO THE USSR, WHERE THEY EXPECT TO BE RECEIVED BY SOVIET OFFICIALS, IN KEEPING WITH EXPERIENCE OF RECENT YEARS, WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

5. EE DEPUTY DIRECTOR BRIEFLY OUTLINED THE STATUS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT WHILE DEPARTMENT FULLY SUPPORTED AOCF OBJECTIVES AS THEY HAD BEEN DESCRIBED, IN VIEW OF STATUS OF US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, IT WOULD BE BEST FOR AOCF TO APPROACH CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY RATHER THAN HAVE DEPARTMENT ACT AS INTER-MEDIARY. IN ADDITION, HE SUGGESTED THAT AOCF CONSIDER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPLORING WITH GOC POSSIBILITY OF ORGANIZING EXHIBIT IN THE US OF JEWISH TORAH CLOTHS AND TAPESTRIES.

6. DEPARTMENT ASKED AOCF REPS TO KEEP US INFORMED OF THEIR PLANS AND TOLD THEM WE WOULD INFORM EMBASSY PRAGUE OF OUR DISCUSSION.

7. INCIDENTALLY, RABBI SCHNEIER HAS BEEN A CONSTRUCTIVE COLLABORATOR WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR MANY YEARS. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE SECRETARY'S DELEGATION WHICH RETURNED THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN TO HUNGARY AND IS EXTREMELY KNOWLEDGEABLE ON EASTERN EUROPE. HE IS A GOOD FRIEND OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT LUERS AND OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS. COOPER

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